

Mr. BACON. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the passing of Omaha's last surviving Tuskegee Airmen, Robert Holts, who passed away on February 12 at his retirement home in Bellevue.

He joined the still-segregated U.S. Army in November 1942, and quickly landed in an aviation training program that would lead to a slot in the 332nd Fighter Group known as the Tuskegee Airmen. Not only did he and other members make history as the first all-Black unit, but they also made history through their exemplary service, and they changed America for the better and forever.

The famed Tuskegee Airmen protected Allied bombers during the last 2 years of World War II. They were the first group of African-American military pilots and airmen in the U.S. Army Air Corps, and Holts was one of the 21 Tuskegee Airmen that had ties to Omaha.

Holts continually surmounted the challenges of racism, segregation policies, and the Great Depression faced in his life.

Born in 1924, Holts attended Kellom Elementary School and Omaha Central High School. Holts had a strong high school record, and he was given the opportunity to join an aviation program that flew P-51 Mustangs. They became known as the Tuskegee Airmen, a nod to the name of the base they trained at. More than 15,000 missions were flown by the Tuskegee Airmen, and they destroyed 261 German aircraft.

After the war, Holts worked as a U.S. Postal Service employee for nearly 40 years before settling in North Omaha near family. A little more than 60 years later, Holts and his fellow Tuskegee Airmen were awarded the Congressional Gold Medal for their heroic actions in World War II. Not only have they been lauded for their actions as fighters for our country in a world war, but as fighters for civil rights for all.

Our country is better and stronger because of the Tuskegee Airmen and heroes like Robert Holts. We shall always remember the legacy of Robert Holts.

HONORING GINA PONCE AND B.C. CLARK

Mr. BACON. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor two women from our district for Women's History Month because of their commitment to advancing opportunities and experiences for women. Gina Ponce and B.C. Clark are historymakers, as they work to empower women in our community.

Born and raised in the Bronx, Gina has been in Nebraska for 25 years and is the mother of two sons and grandmother to one granddaughter. She credits her father as her inspiration in serving others, as he led by example in his service to the community.

Gina has been in her current position as director of Latino community outreach at Bellevue University since 2015, where she is responsible for managing outreach and admissions including the Latino community.

She sees her two biggest accomplishments as founding the Women on a Mission nonprofit 11 years ago and opening the El Camino Latino Center at Bellevue University. Women on a Mission engages in outreach to build up and empower women and girls spiritually, physically, and emotionally.

Recent awards she received include the 2020 Heartland United for Puerto Rico Award, the 2017 Women of Color Leadership Award, and the 2013 Latina of the Year. However, Gina says she sees her award every day in the success of those she has helped, and she credits her own success to the passion and gifts that come out of the South Omaha community.

Also passionate about assisting women in their visions and dreams is the founder and president of the Metro Omaha Women's Business Center, B.C. Clark. She continues to inspire women and accelerate their success by creating economic opportunities through programs offered by her center. Those opportunities include a monthly business forum, quarterly Success Series, and various workshops and trade shows to educate, inspire, and encourage entrepreneurs and businessowners.

In 2014, B.C. also started the Business Connection Nebraska, a local television show on public access TV, where she showcases businessowners from across the State. She is also a well-respected speaker and mentor for several community and minority business groups, where her knowledge of how to increase profitability and operational efficiency, as well as satisfy customer expectations, has helped many businessowners excel professionally.

In addition, B.C. volunteers at Carole's House of Hope, where she mentors inner-city young women. She is a former president of the Midlands Latino Community Development Center, encouraging and promoting Latino businesses.

B.C. credits her faith as a factor in her own achievement and is quick to recognize others who have helped her in her quest to help others find success. She also recognizes that a belief in yourself will make you successful. As she told her own granddaughters: "You don't have to wait for a man to give you a diamond ring. If you want it, you can work for it."

Both Gina Ponce and B.C. Clark are role models not only for women, but for our community, as they have demonstrated their service to help others succeed. Because of leaders such as they, the numbers of businesses owned by women in the United States has increased by 114 percent in the last 20 years, and 64 percent of new women-owned businesses were started by women of color.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 10 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Margaret Grun Kibben, offered the following prayer:

Tender and loving God, we come to You on this International Women's Day in gratitude for the care and example You have lifted up before us in the women whose lives in some way have touched our own, and those whose virtue in the face of untold and inconceivable challenges has provided for us a legacy of fortitude and faith.

For women like Rahab and Deborah whose bravery and courage challenged expectations and changed the course of nations.

For countless and hidden figures who continue to challenge institutional norms, influencing and enriching national research, advancements in technology, social sciences, and the arts.

For the unheralded mothers who challenge the hours in a day and find ways to manage households and nurture young leaders.

For the faithful, like Mary, Ruth, and Esther who in the face of cultural challenges, nonetheless yielded to Your will and effected Your loving plan for Your people.

As we go about our business and address the concerns of these days, may we hear from the wisdom of these paragons, the teaching of kindness. May we learn from their lives' work, the importance of courage. May we be inspired by the strength and honor of these women, that our conduct would be worthy of their virtuous history.

Like them, Almighty God, call each of us to choose to challenge the limiting prejudice of expectations, the destructive norms of injustice, the overwhelming crush of daily living; that in facing these challenges, each of us would prove faithful to and honor the gift of life You give us this day.

We pray in the abiding love of Your holy name.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. Pursuant to section 5(a)(1)(A) of House Resolution 8, the Journal of the last day's proceedings is approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. NORTON led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The Chair will entertain up to 15 requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

AMERICANS WANT TO BE RESCUED NOW

(Ms. NORTON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, with final passage of President Biden's American Rescue Plan expected tomorrow, the priorities I pressed for, including \$1,400 in direct payments per person and \$26 billion in rental assistance makes the Rescue Plan live up to its name.

The rescue extends to the District of Columbia, which retrieves \$755 million taken from the District when Republicans treated the District as a territory in the CARES Act. Instead, the new bill treats D.C. as a State as usual because D.C. residents pay full Federal taxes, and it funds D.C. for city, State, and county levels because D.C. provides services at all three levels.

This bill resisted the Republican plan for less money because the American people want to be rescued now, not later. The American Rescue Plan Act will hasten doing our business together again on this House floor and getting the American people back to business and to school.

CONGRESS IS MAKING PROGRESS

(Mr. POSEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. POSEY. Mr. Speaker, over the past 10 years we have made a lot of progress in making Congress more transparent and accountable.

After years of persistence, I was pleased to see that the House finally adopted the comparative text rule that I proposed.

The comparative text rule made it possible for Members of the House and the public to actually see and understand exactly what a bill changes.

Every legislature in the country does that. But sadly, boom, in an instant this year the House abolished that rule, even though it was a top priority with the bipartisan Government Efficiency, Accountability, and Reform Task Force for commonsense solutions to a better government.

Now, Mr. Speaker, that is shameful.

HELP IS ON THE WAY

(Ms. PLASKETT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1

minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. PLASKETT. Mr. Speaker, the COVID pandemic and economic crisis are destroying the lives and livelihoods of tens of millions of Americans across the country. And our most vulnerable communities are bearing the brunt.

Thankfully, help is on the way. The American Rescue Plan will save lives and livelihoods by putting vaccines in arms, putting children safely back in school, putting money in people's pockets, and finally putting people back in jobs.

I am proud to note the inclusion of provisions in this bill for the Virgin Islands and other territories that we all in this House have been fighting for. This plan creates equality in the child tax credit, the earned income tax credit, including an advancement of the child tax credit in 2021.

The child tax credit provision in the bill will be transformational in the lives of hundreds and millions of children, lifting them out of poverty. This is generational change. This will reduce poverty and improve the economic standing of Americans throughout our country. We are grateful for this bill.

THE MARS ROVER IS AN INCREDIBLE MARVEL

(Mr. GONZALEZ of Ohio asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. GONZALEZ of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, 2 weeks ago our country witnessed the incredible marvel of American ingenuity when NASA successfully landed its Perseverance rover on Mars, laying the groundwork for the next generation of space travel and exploration.

Perseverance has four primary goals: determine whether life ever existed on Mars, understand the climate of the planet, characterize the geology of Mars, and finally, make any preparations necessary for human exploration. These goals are crucial not only for our Nation's eventual mission to send humans to Mars, but also for the continued advancement of mankind as a whole.

Before making its journey to the red planet, Perseverance spent some time in my backyard in northeast Ohio. It was researchers and scientists at Cleveland's NASA Glenn Research Center that developed the rover's power source and oversaw testing the rover's parachute needed to land safely on Mars.

Mars truly is the next frontier in space travel and exploration. I am incredibly grateful that northeast Ohio has added yet another chapter to our State's already rich history in space travel and exploration.

I look forward to what Perseverance can teach us about this new unknown and what our next endeavor will be.

RECOGNIZING THE GREAT ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF WOMEN

(Ms. PELOSI asked and was given permission to address the House for 1

minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, today is International Women's Day, a day to recognize the great accomplishments of women and the great possibilities that lie ahead.

During the course of the day we will be having some recognitions. But one very important one is that: As we speak here now, on the Senate side, they are finishing up the engrossment of the American Rescue Plan.

This plan, as my distinguished colleague from the Virgin Islands pointed out, does so many great things for America's children, America's families, and America's women. If you are a caregiver, whether for a child or a senior or whatever, childcare is substantially supported in this legislation.

If you are a teacher, schools will be able to be open more safely with increased funding to do so with ventilation, separation, and the rest to have our children and teachers return safely as well.

The child tax credit and the refundable child tax credit, the earned income tax credit—as was mentioned by the distinguished chairwoman on the Ways and Means Committee, which was largely responsible, along with ROSA DELAUNO, RICHIE NEAL and MIKE THOMPSON in getting all this done—the point is, we will be having a further discussion about this bill as we move forward to its passage in the next 24, 48 hours.

It is important to acknowledge on International Women's Day the connection between the advancement of women, the recognition of the contributions of women, and the needs that are met in the American Rescue Plan.

As President Biden said, help is on the way. That promise is kept in this legislation to all Americans. I wanted to acknowledge specifically the women of America.

VETERANS NEED VACCINES

(Ms. LOIS FRANKEL of Florida asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. LOIS FRANKEL of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I join Madam Speaker in celebrating International Women's Day.

Today, I rise in support of the VA VACCINES Act. This is a bipartisan bill that will expand the VA's ability to provide COVID-19 vaccines to all veterans and their caregivers, regardless of whether or not they are enrolled in the VA healthcare system.

Mr. Speaker, the VA should not turn away any veteran who wants this life-saving vaccine. You know, where I live in Florida—and I am sure it is like this in most places—it is still like playing the lottery to get a vaccine.

This vaccine is free to all Americans and is paid for by our tax dollars. So, in my opinion, Mr. Speaker, for our veterans who have selflessly served our